A CHARGE

DELIVERED TO THE

CLERGY

OF THE

ARCHDEACONRY OF ELY,

ON

THURSDAY, JUNE 12, 1788,

By R. WATSON, D.D. F.R.S.

BISHOP OF LANDAFF AND ARCHDEACON OF ELY.

CAMBRIDGE,

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MDCCLXXXVIII.

BRITISH MUSEUM

TO THE

REVEREND THE CLERGY

OF THE

ARCHDEACONRY OF ELY,

THIS

CHARGE,

PRINTED AT THEIR REQUEST,

IS

WITH GREAT RESPECT INSCRIBED,

BY THEIR FAITHFUL SERVANT

R. LANDAFF.

TO THE

REVEREND THE CLERGY

OF THE

ARCHDEACONRY OF LEIT,

THIS

C H A R G E,

BEING DESIRED AT THEIR REQUEST,

IS

RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY THEIR FAITHFUL SERVANT

R. HAMILTON.

A

CHARGE, &c.

REVEREND BRETHREN,

WHEN you did me the honor of meeting me in this place at my primary Viſitation, I took the liberty of addreſſing you on a Subject of great importance to the intereſts of Religion and Learning: I then promiſed not to be frequently troubleſome to you in that way, though I reſerved to myſelf the liberty of being ſo, whenever I ſhould ſee a fit occaſion for treſpaſſing on your patience. Such an occaſion has now preſented itſelf; for ſince my

return from London, I have ſeen a Paper written by a very reſpectable Clergyman of the Archdeaconry, requeſting a Meeting of his Brethren on this day, to take into conſideration — *A Scheme for eſtabliſhing a fund for the better maintenance and education of the Widows and Orphans of the poorer Clergy of the eſtabliſhed Church.* — This Scheme, we are given to underſtand, if approved by the Clergy, will meet with the concurrence and ſupport of the Biſhop of the Dioceſe; and, could the Suffrage of your Archdeacon have any weight with you, I ſhall be very ready to give it, in furtherance of the ſame deſign. My wiſhes to ſee ſuch an equitable diſtribution of the Property of the Church take place, as that all the Parochial Clergy might be decently provided for in their life time, are well known to you; and they certainly extend, to the making a proviſion for the decent maintenance of their wives and children after their death. Schemes of the kind here propoſed have been carried into exe-

execution in ſeveral Dioceſes; there is one in the Dioceſe of Landaff, which was ſet on foot by my Predeceſſor, and has been ſupported, as well as I have been able, by myſelf: It has been found to be of great uſe, and has met with ſo much encouragement, that, even in a Dioceſe where the Clergy are nearly twice as numerous as in the Dioceſe of Ely, and where they are more poorly provided for than in any Dioceſe of the Kingdom, we have annually collected more money, than we have been able prudently to expend in relieving the Objects, for whoſe Benefit the Inſtitution was originally formed. What may not then be expected in ſuch a Dioceſe as this, where the Number of poor Clergy is comparatively ſmall, and where the Biſhoprick, the Cathedral Church, and many of the Livings are amply endowed? Our expectations of Succeſs will receive very conſiderable increaſe if we reflect, that this Dioceſe includes in it the Univerſity of Cambridge;

that the Patronage, of above a fourth part of all the Livings in the Dioceſe, belongs to the ſeveral Colleges; and that the Members of theſe Colleges, whether corporately or individually conſidered, never have been, and there is good reaſon to believe, never will be backward, in promoting any work of Humanity and Piety. I ſpeak of Piety on this Occaſion, becauſe I very earneſtly wiſh to combine with the Scheme of providing for the Widows and Orphans of Clergymen another of equal, and of, perhaps, much greater National Importance—*That of providing for the Inſtruction of the Children of the poor, in the Principles of the Chriſtian Religion.*—You will permit me to enlarge a little on this head.

In conſequence of his Majeſty's Proclamation, recommending to the Attention of the Magiſtrates a due enforcement of the Laws reſpecting Morals, a number of Gentlemen, of the firſt Rank, Fortune, and Cha-

Character, have formed themſelves into a Society for promoting this ſalutary purpoſe. Every attempt of the kind is laudable in the perſons who make it, and we ſhould all of us do what we can in ſeconding their good intentions; but I freely own to you, that my hopes of a general Reformation of Manners are founded on a reformation of the Education of Children, more than on that of Men grown old and hardened in Vice. We have much unhappy experience of the inefficacy of Laws in producing amendment of Manners. Our Laws againſt ſwearing, ſabbath-breaking, tipling, gaming, duelling, fornicating, are ſufficiently ſevere; nor is it wholly to be attributed to the inattention of the Magiſtrate that they do not produce their proper effect; for whilſt the makers of Laws ſet an example of breaking them, and whilſt the manners of the people in general are in oppoſition to the preſcripts of our Statutes, it will not

be poſſible, for the moſt able and active Magiſtrates, to attempt the execution of them with Succeſs. The preſent ſituation of this Kingdom reſembles that of Rome, when an inundation of the Wealth of the Univerſe had corrupted the manners of its citizens — the prevalence of *faſhion* was ſuperior to the power of *Law* — *mores leges perduxerunt in poteſtatem ſuam* — may as juſtly be ſaid of us, as it was ſaid of the *Romans*, even in the days of *Plautus*. All nations, indeed, of which we have any account, in becoming rich have become profligate; a torrent of depraved morality has, in every opulent State, borne down with irreſiſtible Violence, thoſe mounds and fences by which the wiſdom of Legiſlators endeavoured to protect chaſtity, ſobriety, and virtue. If any check can be given to the corruption of a State increaſing in riches, and declining in morals, it muſt be given, not by Laws attempting to alter the inveterate habits of

Men,

Men, but by Education modelling the hearts of Children to a due ſenſe of moral and religious excellence.

The inſtilling into the minds of the riſing Generation great Piety towards God, and the abſolute neceſſity of paying an uniform and unqualified Obedience to the Laws of the Goſpel, in oppoſition to the diſorderly propenſities of ſenſe and the immoral maxims of the world, is an employment of all others moſt befiting our Characters as Miniſters of the Goſpel, and as Servants of the State. As Miniſters of the Goſpel we cooperate with the benevolent Author of the Univerſe, when we endeavour to train up free and intelligent Beings, to ſuch degrees of moral perfection, as may fit them for the participation of future glory: As Servants of the State, we promote the peace and good order of the community, when we endeavour to throw the controul of Piety over the impetuoſity of Appetite,

when we oppoſe the reſtraints of Religion to the ſeductions of the world; for the tranquility, nay the very exiſtence of every civil community, is endangered, when religion has loſt its influence over the minds of its members: The community may continue, for a time, to rot in its own corruption, to go on from bad to worſe, to increaſe in commerce, riches, and luxury, and to decreaſe in frugality, temperance, and piety; it may even exhibit indications of ſtrength and vigour; but they are like the indications of that man's ſanity, whoſe health depends on his high living; the very means of his well-looking, are the inſtruments of his deſtruction.

NOTWITHSTANDING that liberty of Action, and freedom of Volition, which are properly eſteemed parts of the human conſtitution, it is certain that man is, in a great degree, what habit and education make him to be. A mighty oak, which

ſpreads

ſpreads its branches and thruſts forth its roots in a thouſand complicated forms, is ſaid, by Naturaliſts, not to differ in figure from the almoſt imperceptible Germ which vegetated in its parent Acorn; and it may as truly be obſerved, that the moral form and character of every grown up man, is little elſe than the developement, and the enlargement of thoſe principles of thinking, and habits of acting, which were delineated by chance, or impreſſed by deſign on the tablet of his heart at an early age. Of what unſpeakable importance then is it, that Parents, Paſtors, Tutors, Schoolmaſters, ſhould all conſpire, in their reſpective ſtations, in teaching Children the Principles of Chriſtianity, and in perſuading them to reſpect, on all occaſions, the Goſpel as the rule of their Actions?

I KNOW it may be diſputed, whether the preſent times are worſe than former times have been, our vices may be different from

thoſe

thoſe of our anceſtors without being greater; but it will not be diſputed, that they are great enough, as thoſe of all times have been, to require the utmoſt aſſiduity of the Clergy and of all good men, in leſſening their enormity; and there is no mean of doing that with effect ſo probable, as that of paying a particular attention to the Education of Children. "Young perſons, ſays *Oſtervald*, ought to be the chief objects of the care of Paſtors, no part of their office is more uſeful or rewards their labour with better ſucceſs than that. Their endeavours to mend thoſe who are come to age, are for the moſt part to little purpoſe, but what they do for children is of great benefit: If therefore they have a Zeal for the Glory of God, and if they wiſh to ſee a change in the face of the Church, let them apply themſelves to the inſtructing of Youth, and make it their buſineſs to form a new Generation." An attention to the Education of the children of the poor, with

a view

a view of forming a new Generation, is greatly wanted in every County in the Kingdom, and as much in this as in any other. The Peaſants in the villages of this County are remarkably perverſe, ſtupid and illiterate; the mechanics in the towns are debauched, and ill-mannered, and the children of both are brought up in rudeneſs ignorance, and irreligion. It is not neceſſary, on this occaſion, to inquire into the cauſes of this degeneracy; the fact is generally admitted; a remedy for the evil is required; and, after having employed ſome thought in conſidering the ſubject, I have no heſitation in declaring to you, that no remedy ſeems to be more likely to be attended with ſucceſs, than the inſtituting of Schools, in which all the children of the poor may be educated without any expence to their Parents, from the age of five or ſix, to that of eight or nine, or during any ſhorter or longer period your wiſdoms may determine.

I HAVE

I HAVE a ſtrong confidence that, if you inſtitute your Society for the double purpoſe—*of making a better proviſion for the maintenance and Education of the widows and orphans, of the poorer Clergy; and for eſtabliſhing Schools for the Education of the Children of the poorer Laity*,—the ſubſcriptions of the Clergy and Laity will be abundantly ſufficient for the attainment of both theſe ends. I had the happineſs to concur with others, in recommending a trial to be made of the extent of the Liberality of this Univerſity, and Town, in the eſtabliſhment of weekly inſtead of Sunday Schools; and the event has fully juſtified the expectation. By the zealous and judicious exertions of the Miniſters of the ſeveral Pariſhes, a plan has not only been concerted but executed, by which every poor perſon, in this large and populous place, may have his children taught to read their Bible, and inſtructed in other matters, if, by their good conduct, they appear to deſerve further encouragement.

ment. A Project of ſuch vaſt importance to the temporal and eternal welfare of many poor individuals, which has ſucceeded ſo well in one place deſerves to be tried at leaſt in others. This certainly is on the whole an opulent Dioceſe; and many may be of opinion, that a ſubſcription for the relief of the Widows and Orphans of the Clergy is not at all, or not much wanted in it.—I am afraid that ſubſcriptions for ſuch an end will never ceaſe to be wanted in every Dioceſe in the Kingdom — but, if to the taking care of the indigent of our own Fraternity, we add an attention to the Spiritual welfare of the indigent amongſt the Laity; every difficulty, as to the neceſſity for, and the utility of, the Scheme muſt, in the judgment of all thinking and ſerious perſons, be wholly removed. It will redound to the everlaſting honor of the Clergy of the Dioceſe of Ely,—that they were the firſt in Great Britain, perhaps in Chriſtendom, who

who undertook the eſtabliſhing a fund, by voluntary contributions, for educating not merely the poor Orphans of the Clergy, but the children of all the poor perſons within the Dioceſe in the principles of the Chriſtian Religion.—If we wiſely, and cordially, and zealouſly unite, in becoming the Authors of ſuch a liberal and chriſtian Plan, there can be no queſtion, but that the richer part of the Laity will aſſiſt us with their advice, with their authority, and with their ſubſcriptions; and the poorer part of the Laity will look upon us with reverence, gratitude, and benignity; when they ſee us not ſolely attentive to the collection of our dues, but occupied in miniſtering to their children that Education with which they may, and without which they ſcarcely can, emerge from the gulf of poverty in which they are born; and which, whatever effect it may have in advancing their temporal concerns, will aſſuredly be of infinite uſe to them, in promoting

moting concerns of infinitely greater moment. Many pious perſons, in every part of the Kingdom, have of late Years turned their thoughts to this ſubject, and employed their chriſtian Zeal in eſtabliſhing Sunday Schools; what I wiſh us to be engaged in is, not the aboliſhing or ſuperſeding theſe Schools, but the making ſuch an enlargement of the deſign, as may give us a well grounded expectation of accompliſhing our object more extenſively, and effectually. I think I do not form an improper eſtimation of the comprehenſive views, and Chriſtian tempers of the Clergy of the Dioceſe. and of the Members of this Univerſity, in conjunction with the judicious part of the Laity, in ſaying—*that the Eſtabliſhment of a fund, for the protection of the Orphans and Widows of poor Clergymen, and for the Inſtitution or the Enlargement of Pariſh weekly Schools for the inſtruction of the children of the poor, are objects calculated to meet with their ſerious approbation and liberal ſupport.*

In many villages there are, at preſent, Schools with ſmall Endowments; it may be more proper in ſuch places to ſend the children of the poor to ſuch Schools, than to inſtitute new ones, and to pay for their education at a certain weekly allowance for each. This mode will be moſt likely to induce the Maſter or Miſtreſs, not only to be diligent in teaching, but ſtudious in perſuading the poor to be punctual in ſending their children to be taught: The endowments are, moſt of them, ſo inconſiderable, that without ſome additional encouragement much diligence cannot reaſonably be expected from the Teacher. In villages where there are no endowed Schools, the ſame mode of payment may be adopted, though it will be requiſite to make the rate of payment higher; and great care muſt be taken in finding out proper Teachers. The inſpection of theſe Schools will naturally be committed to the miniſters of the reſpective Pariſhes, and a ſpecial Injunction ſhould be laid

laid on the Teachers, that they aſſemble their Scholars for one Leſſon at leaſt, or for more if it ſhould be thought fit, every Lord's Day, and that they attend them regularly to the ſervice of the Church; for I conſider the habituating Children of every condition to an attendance on public worſhip, and to a reverence for the Lord's Day, as one of the moſt uſeful parts of their Education. Some villages are ſituated ſo near each other, that a good School eſtabliſhed in one of them may be ſufficient for that and the adjoining ones. The poor in the North of England never ſcruple ſending their children, with their dinners in their Satchels, a mile or two to School every day; and a proper exertion on our parts may generate a ſimilar temper in the poor of this Country. The children complain of no hardſhip in walking to a School at ſome diſtance from their home; they go in company with each other; the walk is a plea-

ſure to them; and the exerciſe and expoſure to the Air ſtrengthens their conſtitutions.

If this plan cannot at firſt be brought to bear in its full extent, a beginning, however, may be made; and hopes of enlargement reaſonably entertained. Whether you will permit the children to continue at School for three days in each week, for four Years; or for ſix days for two Years, ſo that by the quick ſucceſſion all may have ſome benefit, and the labour of thoſe who can labour may not be entirely loſt to their parents, are ſubjects on which I forbear to ſay any thing at preſent. Theſe and many other points may in future be determined by you, if you think the propoſal itſelf deſerving of your conſideration. There ſhould be no mean jealouſies amongſt us; no obſtruction given to the general deſign, becauſe particular perſons may happen to take a more active part, or to have a more extenſive

tenſive commiſſion given to them, than we were diſpoſed to take, or than chanced to be intruſted to our management: All littleneſs of this ſort (which, however, to the ſhame of humanity be it ſpoken, often prevails in Undertakings of this kind) ſhould by us be utterly done away, upon the enlarged and liberal principle of each of us doing all the good we can, in any way in which we may have an Opportunity of doing it; the cenſure and the applauſe of Men are equally beneath the conſideration of him, who is to give an Account of his conduct to *Jeſus Chriſt*, his Maſter and his Judge.

The difficulty of the undertaking may to ſome appear great; it is not great in reality. The Dioceſe conſiſts of only eight Deaneries, and theſe are none of them very extenſive; they do not, one with another, comprehend above twenty Churches each, or one hun-

dred and ſixty in the whole. This Eccleſiaſtical Diviſion of the Dioceſe will be found to be very commodious, if what is recommended be adopted. The whole of the Incumbents in each Deanery may be conſtituted the Governors, a few of them be annually elected the Managers, and the Rural Dean be appointed the Treaſurer, and general ſuperintendant of the Schools in that Deanery; and thus the difficulty, which is apt to alarm Men when great undertakings are propoſed, would, in this, by being ſubdivided, be aboliſhed; and the diſorder attending complicated concerns, wholly avoided by a methodical Arrangement of the ſeveral parts. It ſhould be a principal part of the office of the Treaſurer of each Deanery to apply to the *Owners* of Lands, whether reſident in the Deanery or not, for their aſſiſtance in ſo charitable an undertaking; and to the opulent *Occupiers* of Lands, who will find it their intereſt to encourage a plan,

a plan, the object of which is to render the children of their labourers, ſober, honeſt, and religious.

I HAVE thought it my duty to open this matter to you in the manner I have done; but I ſhall moſt readily fall in with the general Sentiment, whether it be conſonant to or diſcordant from mine own. You have moſt of you had more experience in the management of Country Pariſhes, and more knowledge of the extreme ignorance of their inhabitants than I have ever had an opportunity of acquiring; but we all of us, I truſt, have the ſame Object in view—the ſalvation of the Souls of Men—this is the great principle by which we ſhould all of us be actuated, the means of applying it in practice are many and important, and the care of the education of the children of the poor is, in my judgment, one of the moſt important. I could never bring myſelf to think, that a Clergyman had done the whole

of

of his duty in performing, with regularity, the ſtated ſervices of the Church in which he is appointed to miniſter; that performance is, undoubtedly, an eſſential part of his duty, but the duty itſelf extends further; it watches over the morals of every perſon of every degree, condition, and age within his Cure, as a Father watches over the morals of his Children. The Children of the Poor are, as to their inſtitution in the Chriſtian Religion, the Children of the Public; and more eſpecially are they the Children of their Paſtor; God grant that they may *be his hope and crown of rejoicing in the preſence of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

The diſcipline which ſubſiſted in the primitive Church is at an end; and no one thinks of reviving it. The manners of Chriſtians cannot, in this Age, be corrected by eccleſiaſtical mulcts, and penances. Libertiniſm and Irreligion rear their ſtandards in every village, and no one is afraid or aſhamed

aſhamed of inliſting under them. If Men can eſcape the warrant of the *Juſtice*, and the ſtaff of the *Conſtable*, they trouble themſelves not at all about the admonitions of their Paſtors, the cenſures of their Church, or the terrors of their Religion. One thing, my Brethren, notwithſtanding, ſtill remains to us, in which our uſefulneſs may be made apparent, and we may conſcientiouſly fulfil a main end of our Miniſtration; and this conſiſts — in our preaching *the Goſpel to the poor*, — in our ſuperintending the Education of thoſe who, without our care, will have no religious Education at all — no Senſe of a Supreme Being — no hopes of the Redemption that is in Jeſus, — but who will continue to be Pagans, as it were, in the Boſom of the Church of Chriſt.

RESO-

RESOLUTIONS unanimouſly entered into by the Clergy preſent at the Viſitation.

Reſolved, That it is the Opinion of this Meeting, that a Society be eſtabliſhed for raiſing a Fund by voluntary Contribution, for the Maintenance and Education of the Widows and Orphans of Poor Clergymen within the Dioceſe of Ely.

Reſolved, That the Rural Deans in the ſaid Dioceſe be a Committee for preparing Rules for the future Government of this Society; that any Five of them be a *Quorum*; and that the Committee be empowered to add to their Number ſo that the whole Number ſhall not exceed Twenty.

Reſolved, That the firſt Meeting of the Committee be held at the Roſe Ta-

Tavern in Cambridge, on Thurſday the 10th of next July, at Eleven o'Clock in the Forenoon.

Reſolved, That it is the Opinion of this Meeting that the ſeveral Clergy in the Dioceſe of Ely be requeſted, and they are hereby requeſted, to prepare an Account of the ſeveral Schools ſubſiſting in their reſpective Pariſhes; and of the Number of poor Children who might become proper Objects of public Benevolence; if it ſhould be thought practicable to raiſe a Subſcription, adequate to the Expence of inſtructing the ſaid Children in the Principles of the Chriſtian Religion.

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